REMARKS

Claims 1-32 are pending and stand rejected. Claims 1-2, 4, 7, 9-10, 12-13, 17-20, and 27-31 have been amended.

The specification has been amended to correct typographical errors. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner and Applicants' representatives Jeff Brill and Sabra-Anne Truesdale held a telephone interview on October 9, 2003. The Examiner agreed to prepare a summary of the interview.

Claims 7-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for being indefinite. Claims 7, 9-10, 12-13, 17-20, and 27-31 have been amended to more distinctly claim the invention or to provide proper antecedent basis. The examiner agreed that these amendments would overcome the § 112, second paragraph rejection.

Claims 29-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, for lack of enablement. During the interview, Applicants' representatives explained the invention and pointed the Examiner to parts of the specification that enable these claims. The Examiner agreed to withdraw the rejection as it applied to claims 29, 30, and 32. The Examiner further agreed that if claim 31 were amended to replace "creating" with "using" on line 4, this amendment would overcome the rejection. Claim 31 has been amended accordingly.

Claims 1-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ramanathan or Barrera. Applicants respectfully traverse.

As amended, claim 1 reads:

A system for providing private network services using private addresses in a location remote from private network users, comprising:
a host computer executing a plurality of private virtual servers, each private

virtual server associated with a private network address space and providing private network services to the private network's users, the private network's users located remotely from the private virtual server, wherein a first private network address space associated with a first virtual server and a second private network address space associated with a second virtual server overlap; and ·

a multiplexing/demultiplexing mechanism executed by the host computer, and communicatively coupled to a network to receive a signal from a private network user and to route the received signal to the private virtual server associated with the private network user's network.

The claimed invention relates to a system for private network services using private addresses in a location remote from private network users. Service providers offer private network services by assigning each customer a server. Some service providers assign each customer a virtual server, with multiple virtual servers residing on one physical server. Since the address space of a private network exists independently of address spaces of other networks, address spaces of two different private networks may overlap. This becomes a problem, for example, when two virtual servers residing on one physical server are assigned the same private addresses by two different private networks. The physical server does not know which virtual server should handle which request.

The claimed invention allows providers of virtual servers to properly differentiate between and route transmissions using private addresses on a common host server. A multiplexing/demultiplexing mechanism receives a signal from a private network user and routes the received signal to the private virtual server associated with the private network user's network.

The Examiner states that it is inherent in the cited references that the logical address spaces of private virtual servers cannot overlap because otherwise it would not work. For this reason alone the references cannot disclose or suggest the claimed invention, which in fact can operate with virtual servers operating in overlapping address spaces.

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Barrera does not disclose or suggest the claimed element "wherein a first private network address space associated with a first virtual server and a second private network address space associated with a second virtual server overlap." Instead, Barrera requires that the virtual services each have a unique locator ID (e.g., server name, IP address) and the designated end point ID (e.g., named pipe name, port ID) that is specified for the service type (3:21-28). Since the locators are unique, they cannot overlap as claimed, and thus Barrera cannot possibly disclose or suggested the claimed invention.

Ramanthan is likewise deficient. While Ramanathan briefly mentions virtual hosts and virtual servers, it is in the context of determining whether a host supports virtual servers. Ramanathan also requires that each website hosted by a virtual server to have a unique IP address (31:33-37). Since each website in Ramanathan has a unique IP address, Ramanathan also does not disclose or suggest "a first private network address space associated with a first virtual server and a second private network address space associated with a second virtual server" that overlap.

Since neither reference discloses the use of overlapping address space, it follows that the combination of reference cannot disclose or suggest this feature. Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over Ramanathan and Barrera, both individually and in combination. Claims 7, 10, 13, 19, 20, 24, 29, and 31 also recite virtual servers that are associated with overlapping address spaces and are also patentable over Ramanathan and Barrera for the foregoing reasons.

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The claims not specifically mentioned above incorporate the features of their respective base claims and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are now allowable over the cited art of record and request that the Examiner allow this case. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned in order to advance the prosecution of this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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